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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDING PARA 6)

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/09/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GR](#) [CY](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE/CYPRUS: GOG SUPPORTS UN PROCESS BUT WORRIED
ABOUT TURKEY

REF: HOVENIER/EUR-SE E-MAIL OF 9/9/08

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard for 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) PM Karamanlis and FM Bakoyannis are pleased with the momentum on Cyprus, sending positive signals about the September 3 start of UN-brokered talks. Cyprus has been center stage in Athens with visits from UN Special Envoy Downer and Cypriot Foreign Minister Kyprianou. PM Karamanlis and FM Bakoyannis told Downer that they are pleased with current developments but strongly question Ankara's commitment to -- and potential to spoil -- progress on Cyprus. Karamanlis also emphasized to Downer that he can see "no direct role" for Greece in the talks at this time. According to MFA contacts, Kyprianou's visit was "not linked" to the September 3 UN talks, although he expressed appreciation for GOG support to the process. Beyond consultations on the Cyprus negotiations, Kyprianou and his GOG interlocutors also discussed EU issues, Kosovo and Russia/Georgia. He also publicly stated that the G/C acceptance of the establishment of a bizonal, bicomunal federation already constitutes a "massive concession." End Summary.

Pleased with Momentum - Skeptical About Turkey

2. (C) UN Special Envoy Downer gave selected diplomats a summary of his September 9 meeting with PM Karamanlis. Downer reported that Karamanlis had expressed general support for the process and its goals and was pleased with the momentum of the talks. Karamanlis told Downer he could see "no need" for direct Greek intervention in the process, wanting to leave it to Christofias and the G/Cs. Karamanlis did not lay out any Greek red lines.

3. (C) Downer reported, however, that Karamanlis was worried about Turkey and its role in this process -- pointing to three "different power centers" in Turkey on Cyprus: The President/Prime Minister; the Foreign Minister; and the Chief of the Turkish General Staff. Karamanlis had also wondered aloud if any "backdoor deals" had been cut in the AKP closure case that would affect Turkish positions on Cyprus. Karamanlis also expressed concern that continuing domestic political turmoil in Turkey could negatively impact the Cyprus process. Summing up, Downer said Karamanlis had made

clear he questioned Ankara's support for the process.

14. (C) Karamanlis' International Affairs Advisor Marina Skordeli confirmed Downer's impressions of his meeting with Karamanlis to A/Political Counselor in a September 9 meeting. Karamanlis had been "impressed" by Downer as he seems "realistic but optimistic" and is approaching the negotiations "in a pragmatic way." Karamanlis feels things are "moving in the right direction." However, Karamanlis had thought it important to emphasize to Downer two points:

-- Karamanlis is "not optimistic" about the role Ankara will play in this process, and he is "afraid the process will stall." It is not certain what Ankara's intentions are in this process.

-- The relationship between Greece and the G/Cs is "qualitatively different" than the relationship between Turkey and the T/Cs. Greece cannot dictate to the Christofias what to do in the negotiations -- and "even if it tried, it wouldn't change things." Turkey, however, is in a position to dictate to the T/Cs. It is important Downer understand this inherent difference.

15. (C) MFA Cyprus Department Deputy Director Papadakis told us that FM Bakoyannis had made the same points to Downer, emphasizing Greece's satisfaction with current momentum, offering Greece's good offices in facilitating any possible solution, but expressing concern about Turkey being a spoiler.

U.S. Envoy? Downer Says Not Yet

16. (C) In his September 8 meeting with Athens-based diplomats, Downer said he did not think the U.S. should play a special role on Cyprus at this time, suggesting more robust U.S. engagement now "could be counterproductive." He added that he anticipated special U.S. help would be needed later in the process, particularly with Turkey, suggesting that senior mil-to-mil contacts between U.S. and TGS officers could be particularly important.

Cyprus FM Kyprianou -- "Regular Bilateral Visit"

17. (C) Meanwhile, Cypriot FM Kyprianou visited Athens September 9, on the heels of Downer's visit. Papadakis told us that Kyprianou's visit had "not been linked" to the September 3 start of UN-brokered talks, although the issue of the Cyprus negotiations had been "the main agenda item." Kyprianou met with President Papoulias, PM Karamanlis, FM Bakoyannis, Parliament President Sioufas, and main opposition PASOK President Papandreou. According to MFA contacts, GOG interlocutors reiterated Greek support for the UN-led process and for the positions Christofias has taken in the negotiations. Kyprianou reportedly pledged to keep Greece fully briefed on developments within the negotiations. Finally, Papadakis told us that the two Foreign Ministers had also compared notes on EU issues, as well as Kosovo and Georgia. On the latter, he said no new ground was covered, but both sides reiterated "their known positions."

18. (U) In a press availability following his September 9 meeting with FM Bakoyannis, Kyprianou noted that "a bizonal, bicomunal solution would be a massive concession for Cyprus, as there was never a geographic demarcation before the (Turkish) invasion." Bakoyannis publicly reiterated that any solution must be "just, viable, and functional."
SPECKHARD